After not getting properly perfect-gamed last season by Armando Galarraga, the Indians finally came through in the klutz to get no-hit by Erv Santana in a game that can only be described as "pitiful." The Tribe set an unofficial record (which means, "Buff is too lazy to actually de research, but it sure sounds plausible") by producing five more errors than hits. Lost in the shuffle was a fine outing by David Huff, who may have written his name into the rotation in pen for the foreseeable future.

FINAL

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

R

H

E

Angels (57-48)

0

0

0

0

1

1

0

0

1

3

6

1

Indians (52-50)

1

0

0

0

0

0

0

0

0

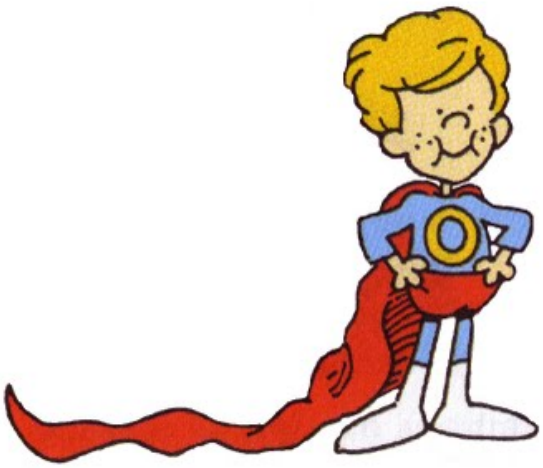
1

0

5

W: Erv. Santana (6-8) L: Huff (1-1)

That … that was not good.



1) Paradigm Shift

I want to watch David Huff pitch.

Now THAT is a paradigm shift. Over the past couple of seasons, this has certainly NOT described my attitude toward Huff's outings, but this guy … THIS guy I like to watch.

Huff didn't have the clean sheet he put up last time, giving up an earned run in 5 2/3 innings of work, but he still had many of the hallmarks of a guy who can have success in this league:

5 H in 5 2/3 IP
0 BB

4 Ks
10 swings-and-misses
66% strike percentage

If there is a complaint, it would be somewhat along the lines of what scared me in his first incarnation: a 3:10 GO:FO ratio that accompanied 3 of the 5 hits being for extra bases. His earned run was the result of a leadoff triple and a sacrifice fly: while Huff techincally kept the ball in the park, it wasn't by much, and the types of contact he allowed are often harbingers of homers to come.

Of course, Josh Tomlin has inured me to this sort of thing to a minor extent, but I would still be careful about claiming that Huff is any sort of rotation savior.

On the other hand, he is missing more bats, and 4 Ks is a nice start (would be a K/9 over 6). M ore importantly, though, Huff's zero walks allow him to give up a few more deep flies without nearly as much damage: his problems last years were often as a result of handing out free passes like so many jam band fliers at the Whole Foods, then getting zapped when those guys came in to score on a long hit.

I would like to see a higher first-pitch strike percentage: perhaps this is in response to Tomlin's remarkable performance the day before, but 12 of 24 is not very good. The question becomes

whether Huff's "stuff" has improved to the point where he can trust it more often.

The 10 swings-and-misses should give him a little more confidence in that regard.

(The Devil's Advocate in me feels obligated to point out that the Angels are far less than an elite offensive team: two batters have an OBP over .315, and one is Maicer Izturis.

Their cleanup hitter hits .218 with a .250 OBP.)

2) Snide Aside

I feel strongly that Mitch Talbot is having a significant setback in recovering from his back injury.

I expect it to last well into Huff's sixth start, at least.

Maybe further.

Unless someone wants to trade for him.

In that case, I'm sure he's fine.

3) Tales from the North Hill Little League

Listen, I have watched this game many times in my life.

The error by Erick Aybar was reminiscent of any number of shortstops I played with, although they would usually tell you that the infield at Patterson Park was notorious for having gravel and other small rocks right in the path of the ground ball that bounced off their glove, chest, or forehead. This allowed Zeq Carrera to reach first and steal second, which was also somewhat automatic in my league. (The average catcher was a boy whose growth pattern was … "uneven." His coordination was often … "drunken." Bobby Wilson is better than, say, Lloyd Straight, my catcher first year, but Straight's equipment-to-body weight ratio was a lot higher than Wilson's.)

Carrera then reached third on a groundout, then scored when Santana uncorked a wild pitch, another staple of our league. (Who can forget the epic Pierson Insurance win over the Polish American Club in which three different PAC pitchers combined to walk 12 consecutive batters?

I certainly can't.)

And thus the Indians took a 1-0 lead.

Not to be outdone, Cleveland began fielding its positions with the grace normally reserved for Tom Green movies or a rhinoceros performing a bris: Lonnie Chisenhall botched a grounder in the third. Asdrubal Cabrera followed with an error of his own. (Huff got out of the inning without yelling at either player, which was distinctly UNlike my league.)

Austin Kearns cleverly played a single into a double, which made him one base better than any right fielder I ever played with.

Joe Smiff unleashed a pitch that bounced off Straight's shinguard to allow a runner to score

from third.

And in the highly-comical 9th inning, Howie Kendrick walked, stole second, took third when Straight's throw flew into center field, and scored on a single.

Pete Bourjos, who singled, then stole ANOTHER base off Straight, took third when first baseman Matt LaPorta, after a fine over-the-shoulder catch, QUADRUPLE-clutched his throw off the shortstop's glove INTO BOURJOS' NOGGIN, making it harder (but not hard enough to actually PREVENT it) for Bourjos to make it to third while retaining consciousness. This is, of course, grossly competent: firstbasemen in my league could hit the runner directly in the head, bypassing the shortstop entirely, mostly because it wouldnot have occurred to the shortstop to cover second base, or perhaps because there was a particularly interesting butterfly, rock, or spectator nearby.

(Come to think of it, this may have explained LaPorta's throw.)

Let me say this: even after making five errors and getting no-hit, WE still got ice cream. The Indians … let's be honest, I'm kind of hoping they did NOT.

4) Offensive outburst!

Lonnie Chisenhall drew a walk!

5) Offensive outburst II!

Both Chisenhall AND Mike Brantley did NOT STRIKE OUT!.

6) The most useless stat ever written

The Indians went 0-for-2 with runners in scoring position.

Well, I mean, of COURSE they did. They got no-hit. C'mon. Use your brain.

7) Welcome to the club!

Kosuke Fukudome joined the club in a trade with the Cubs, giving Travis Buck the wazoo. He will play against Kansas City this weekend.

He got as many hits off Erv Santana Wednesday as the Indians did.

8) Credit Where Credit is Due Dept.

Smiff retired all 4 hitters he faced, striking out 2.

Vinnie Pestano struck out all three hitters he faced.

Jack Hannahan considered making a bubble hat to lighten the mood, but showed the kind of

veteran restraint normally associated with much more talented players.